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Eric L. Maldonado

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Attorney Docket No. SCET 18.734 (100809-16266)**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Inventor: Toru KUWAHARA
Serial No.: 09/876,886
Filed: June 7, 2001
Title: APPARATUS AND METHOD...
Examiner: Robert M. Pond
Art Unit: 3625
Con. No.: 7805

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January 20, 2004

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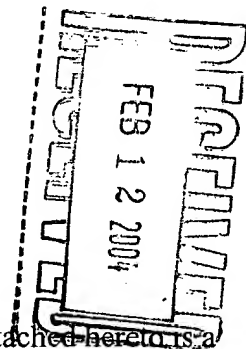
INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

S I R:

In order to comply with discretionary rules 37 CFR §§1.97 and 1.98, attached hereto is a copy of Form PTO-1449 and a copy of the documents listed thereon. This document contains information in which the Examiner may consider to be important in deciding whether to issue a patent in the instant application.

As this statement is being filed prior to issuance of a first Office Action, no fee is due.

Also attached is a copy of a Notification of Reason for Refusal dated November 25, 2003 from the corresponding Japanese Patent Application. All of the documents listed in Form PTO-1449 appear in the Notification of Reason for Refusal.





As these documents are written in a language other than English, English Language abstracts are annexed thereto explaining their relevancy in accordance with 37 CFR §1.98(a)(3).

Each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of this information disclosure statement.

The present Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted in compliance with 37 §CFR 1.56 as an Examiner might consider any cited document important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent, but the citation of each document is not to be construed as an admission that such document is necessarily relevant or prior art. No representation is intended that the cited documents represent the results of a complete search, and it is anticipated that the Examiner in the normal course of examination, will make an independent search and will determine the best prior art consistent with 37 CFR 1.104 (a), and in the course of such search will review for relevance every document cited on the attached form even if not initialed.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully solicited.

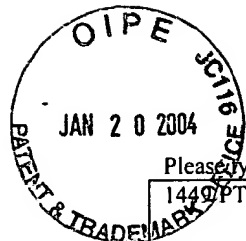
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Respectfully submitted,

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1449 PTO

U.S. Department of Commerce
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Application No. : 09/876,886

Filing Date : June 7, 2001

First Named Inventor: T. KUWAHARA

Group Art Unit : 3625

Examiner Name : R.M. POND

Attorney Docket No. : SCET 18.734

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE
STATEMENT BY APPLICANT**

Sheet 1 of 1

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

| Examiner Initials | Cite No. ¹ | U.S. Patent Document | Kind Code if known ² | Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document | Date of Publication of Cited Document MM-DD- YYYY | Pages, Columns Lines Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear |
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|----------------------|-----------------------|---|---------|--|--|--|
| | | 10-078989 | JP | FUJITSU LTD | 03/24/1998 | |
| | | 09-212742 | JP | OMRON CORP | 08/15/1997 | |
| | | 11-345371 | JP | M & C SYSTEM:KK | 12/14/1999 | |
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